

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 071047Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2820

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL UDORN

UNCLAS VIENTIANE 1663

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, LA

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN REPORTS MARCH 5 CABINET MEETING

1. PGNU SPOKESMAN OUDAY SOUVANNAVONG HELD PRESS CONFERENCE MARCH 6 TO REPORT ON MARCH 5 CABINET MEETING HELD AT VIENTIANE WITH PRIME MINISTER PRESIDING.

2. OUDAY SAID CABINET HAD DECIDED TO AUTHORIZE PRIVATE RETAIL SALE OF GOODS PROVIDED AS AID BY NORTH VIET-NAM, WITH MERCHANTS TO BE ALLOWED TEN PERCENT PROFIT.

3. CABINET ALSO APPROVED A 5 MILLION U.S. DOLLAR PROGRAM TO IMPROVE THE SEWAGE SYSTEM OF CITY OF VIENTIANE. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN AFFAIRS OF THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS WOULD BE IN CHARGE. OUDAY ADDED THAT A NUMBER OF FOREIGN COUNTRIES HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN ASSISTING SUCH A PROJECT. (COMMENT: NO DOUBT THOSE WITH EMBASSIES NEAR SOME OF VIENTIANE'S OPEN SEWERS).

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4. IN QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION, OUDAY WAS ASKED WHAT

STEPS GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING TO MEET PROBLEM OF INCREASED INFLATION AND DECLINING VALUE OF KIP. HE REPLIED, THOUGH CABINET HAD DISCUSSED THESE PROBLEMS AT LENGTH, NO DECISIONS HAD BEEN ARRIVED AT AND PROBLEMS WILL BE CONSIDERED AGAIN AT NEXT WEEK'S MEETING.

5. REPORTER THEN ASKED ABOUT REPORTS OF THAI HARRASMENT OF BARGES CARRYING NORTH VIETNAMESE AID GOODS ON MEKONG FROM PAKSANE TO VIENTIANE. OUDAY REPLIED MINISTRIES OF INTERIOR AND DEFENSE HAD CONFIRMED THESE REPORTS AND THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE STRICT MEASURES TO PREVENT REPETITION OF SUCH INCIDENTS. HE WOULD NOT ELABORATE ON WHAT THESE MEASURES MIGHT BE. OUDAY ADDED HIS PERSONAL BELIEF THAT RTG HAD NOT ORDERED THIS HARASSMENT AND THAT IT HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT ON INITIATIVE OF LOCAL THAI OFFICIALS.

6. XAT LAO REPORTER ASKED IF, IN VIEW OF VISIT TO LAOS OF A SOVIET DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER, SOVIET ASSISTANCE TO LAOS HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY CABINET. OUDAY REPLIED THAT IT HAD NOT. SAME REPORTER ASKED WHEN CABINET DECISION THAT GOVERNMENT WOULD PURCHASE SHARES IN VIENTIANE SLAUGHTER HOUSE WAS TO BE CARRIED OUT. OUDAY ANSWERED THAT NO ACTION TO IMPLEMENT DECISION HAD YET BEEN TAKEN.

7. FINAL QUESTIONER STATED THAT HE HAD HEARD RUMORS THAT PRIME MINISTER HAD CHANGED HIS MIND REGARDING DESIRABILITY OF DISSOLVING THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. OUDAY REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT HEARD THAT RUMOR.
WHITEHOUSE

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